CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.   A method in an electronic auction for generating
off-increment proxy bids, said method comprising the
5   steps of:

    specifying a minimum increment for bidding on an
item;

    receiving a bid for said item from a first bidder
which is currently a high bid for said item;
10   identifying a previously recorded proxy bid from a
second bidder which is greater than said current high bid
but not greater than said current high bid plus said
minimum increment; and

    generating an off-increment bid which becomes a high
15   bid for said item utilizing said proxy bid, wherein said
second bidder holds a current high bid for said item,
further wherein said off-increment bid does not increase
said bid received from said first bidder by said
increment, and wherein said off-increment bid does not
20   exceed said proxy bid.

2.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of
generating an off-increment bid further comprises the
steps of:

    generating a proposed bid, said proposed bid being
25   equal to said minimum increment plus a current high bid
for said item;

    determining if said proposed bid exceeds said proxy
bid; and

in response to a determination that said proposed bid does exceed said proxy bid, awarding said item to said second bidder for said proxy bid, wherein said item is sold for said proxy bid.

5   3.   The method according to claim 2, further comprising the step of in response to a determination that said proposed bid does not exceed said proxy bid, awarding said item to said second bidder for said proposed bid, wherein said item is sold for said proposed bid.

10   4.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of generating an off-increment bid further comprises the steps of:

    generating a proposed bid, said proposed bid being equal to said minimum increment plus a current high bid

15   for said item;

    determining if said proposed bid exceeds said proxy bid; and

    in response to a determination that said proposed bid does not exceed said proxy bid, awarding said item to

20   said second bidder for said proposed bid, wherein said item is sold for said proposed bid.

5.   An electronic auction for generating off-increment proxy bids, comprising:

    a minimum increment for bidding on an item;

25   a bid received for said item from a first bidder which is currently a high bid for said item;

    a previously recorded proxy bid from a second bidder which is greater than said current high bid but not

greater than said current high bid plus said minimum
increment; and

an off-increment bid generated by said electronic
auction which becomes a high bid for said item utilizing
5   said proxy bid, wherein said second bidder holds a
current high bid for said item, further wherein said
off-increment bid does not increase said bid received
from said first bidder by said increment, and wherein
said off-increment bid does not exceed said proxy bid.

10   6.   The electronic auction according to claim 5, further
comprising:

a proposed bid, said proposed bid being equal to
said minimum increment plus a current high bid for said
item;
15   said electronic auction including a CPU executing
code for determining if said proposed bid exceeds said
proxy bid; and

in response to a determination that said proposed
bid does exceed said proxy bid, said electronic auction
20   for awarding said item to said second bidder for said
proxy bid, wherein said item is sold for said proxy bid.

7.   The electronic auction according to claim 6, further
comprising in response to a determination that said
proposed bid does not exceed said proxy bid, said
25   electronic auction for awarding said item to said second
bidder for said proposed bid, wherein said item is sold
for said proposed bid.

8.   The electronic auction according to claim 5, further comprising:

a proposed bid, said proposed bid being equal to said minimum increment plus a current high bid for said
5   item;

said electronic auction including a CPU executing code for determining if said proposed bid exceeds said proxy bid; and

in response to a determination that said proposed
10   bid does not exceed said proxy bid, said electronic auction for awarding said item to said second bidder for said proposed bid, wherein said item is sold for said proposed bid.

9.   A computer readable medium in an electronic auction
15   for generating off-increment proxy bids, said computer readable medium comprising:

instruction means for specifying a minimum increment for bidding on an item;

instruction means for receiving a bid for said item
20   from a first bidder which is currently a high bid for said item;

instruction means for identifying a previously recorded proxy bid from a second bidder which is greater than said current high bid but not greater than said
25   current high bid plus said minimum increment; and

instruction means for generating an off-increment bid which becomes a high bid for said item utilizing said proxy bid, wherein said second bidder holds a current high bid for said item, further wherein said
30   off-increment bid does not increase said bid received

from said first bidder by said increment, and wherein said off-increment bid does not exceed said proxy bid.

10. The computer readable medium according to claim 9, wherein the instruction means for generating an

5 off-increment bid further comprises:

instruction means for generating a proposed bid, said proposed bid being equal to said minimum increment plus a current high bid for said item;

instruction means for determining if said proposed

10 bid exceeds said proxy bid; and

instruction means for in response to a determination that said proposed bid does exceed said proxy bid, awarding said item to said second bidder for said proxy bid, wherein said item is sold for said proxy bid.

15 11. The computer readable medium according to claim 10, further comprising instruction means for in response to a determination that said proposed bid does not exceed said proxy bid, awarding said item to said second bidder for said proposed bid, wherein said item is sold for said

20 proposed bid.

12. The computer readable medium according to claim 9, wherein the instruction means for generating an off-increment bid further comprises:

instruction means for generating a proposed bid,

25 said proposed bid being equal to said minimum increment plus a current high bid for said item;

instruction means for determining if said proposed bid exceeds said proxy bid; and

instruction means for in response to a determination
that said proposed bid does not exceed said proxy bid,
awarding said item to said second bidder for said
proposed bid, wherein said item is sold for said proposed
5   bid.